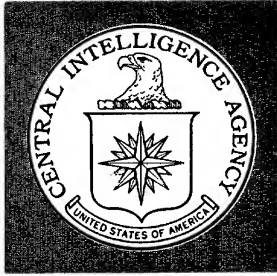


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CIA/SAVA /WVIND 710904



WEEKLY VIETNAM INDICATORS

Week Ending 4 September 1971

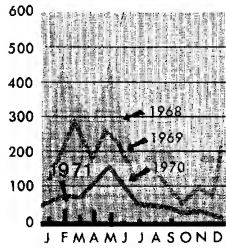
NSA Declassification/Release instructions on File.

For the President Only

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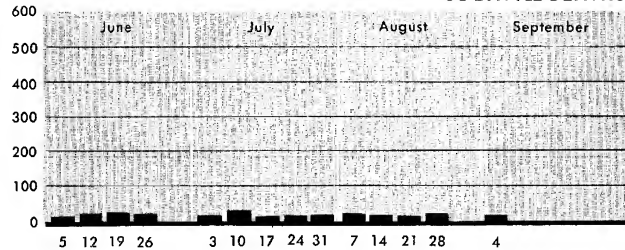
SOUTH VIETNAM WEEKLY INDICATORS

1968-1971
Weekly average for each month



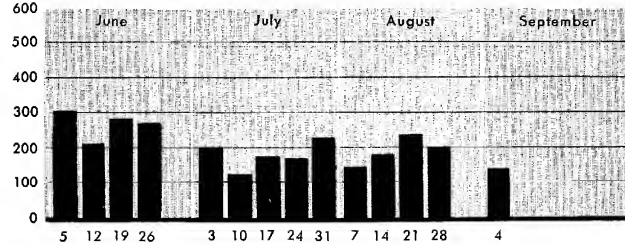
JUNE 1971 - SEPTEMBER 1971
Weekly data as reported

US BATTLE DEATHS



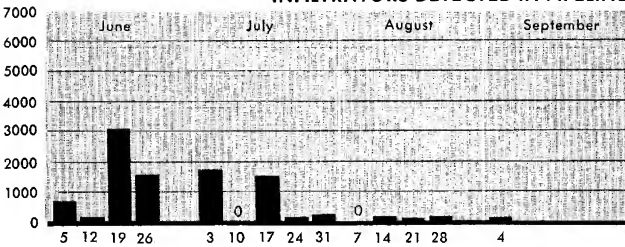
decreased to 16 from the 19 of last week.

SOUTH VIETNAMESE BATTLE DEATHS



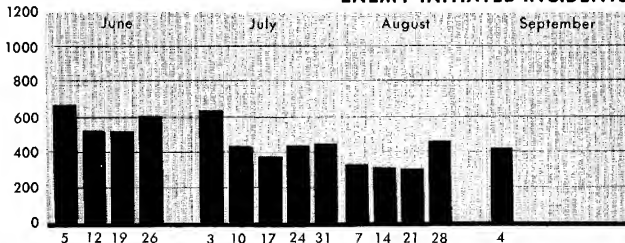
dropped from last week's 200 to 137. The official total will change as late reports are received and will be lower than the figures released to the press by the GVN.

INFILTRATORS DETECTED IN PIPELINE



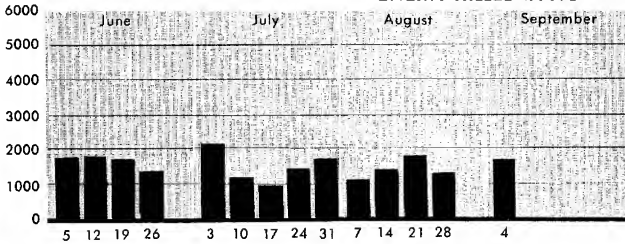
consisted of one small, special purpose group with 3 personnel. The infiltration estimate since 1 October 1970 stands at some 75,600-77,200.

ENEMY-INITIATED INCIDENTS



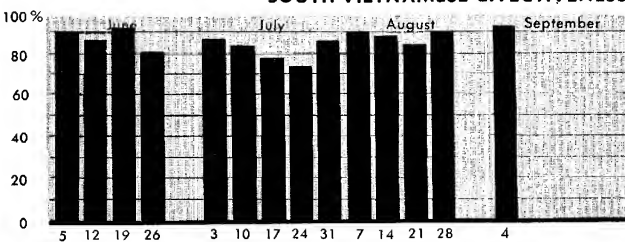
declined from last week's 446 to 405.

ENEMY KILLED IN ACTION



climbed to 1,741 from the 1,234 of last week.

SOUTH VIETNAMESE EFFECTIVENESS



as measured by the percentage of enemy killed by GVN forces rose to 92% from last week's 89%.

Statistics for the latest week shown are preliminary

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Enemy Activity

Enemy activity in South Vietnam during the week returned to the low levels that prevailed prior to the initiation of the Communists' fall-winter campaign (25 August) and their apparent effort to interfere with the South Vietnamese Lower House election (29 August). The low level of operational activity is reflected in the general decline in friendly combat deaths and the incident rate. The enemy has shown no sign of initiating any large scale coordinated attack effort in South Vietnam. In the DMZ area, however, the Communists have improved their overall capabilities with the introduction of a new command and control entity-Front 70. The 52nd NVA Regiment, deployed in western Quang Tri Province, once believed to be going to the Dong Hoi area of North Vietnam, now looks as if it may be slated to join Front 70. The 52nd Regiment's operational area may be taken over by either the 48th or 64th Regiments of the 320th NVA Division. In northern Quang Tri Province, a division-size South Vietnamese force has launched Operation LAM SON 810, designed to interrupt the enemy build-up of a logistical complex and antiaircraft sites in northwestern Quang Tri Province.

Military activity throughout Cambodia was generally light this week. In their most successful operation to date, on 31 August government forces engaged in CHENLA II captured Kompong Thmar, the final objective for this campaign. At the moment there are apparently no plans to continue the operation north to Kompong Thom. Instead, FANK intends to consolidate its positions along Route 6 and possibly southeast along Route 21.

In north Laos, heavy fighting has continued north and east of the Plain of Jars. Evidence of an enemy build-up in the foothills southeast of the Plain was observed on 6 September. In the south, there has been heavy fighting west of Paksong where enemy defensive efforts continue to prevent the capture of that town. There has also been sharp contact farther north at Lao Ngam, the town recaptured by friendly forces on 2 September. The military situation in the remainder of Laos has been quiet.

Enemy Infiltration

The estimate of infiltrators destined for South Vietnam/Cambodia since 1 October 1970 remains at some 75,700-76,200 as the lull in personnel infiltration noted since June continues. The unusually heavy rainfall in North Vietnam coupled with severe flooding (characterized by Premier Pham Van Dong as worse than the catastrophic 1945 floods) and the resultant disruption of transportation facilities and lines could seriously hamper Hanoi's preparations for this year's dry season infiltration effort. Nevertheless, the Communists continue to strengthen their air defense posture in southern North Vietnam, with a movement of SAM elements complementing the recent augmentation of antiaircraft artillery forces above the DMZ. Additionally, the recent isolation of a high-level communications group serving southern North Vietnam air defense forces demonstrates the existence of a sophisticated command and control system directing these forces for the protection of key targets in both Laos and North Vietnam. During the past week, North Vietnamese Air Force (NVAF) activity was highlighted by extensive Ground Control Intercept (GCI) training near the Laos border by the three Bai Thuong-based MIG-21's, the only MIG-21's currently deployed below the 20th parallel. This increased NVAF activity, particularly the emphasis on GCI operations, suggests that the Communists may be planning to attempt MIG-21 intercepts over Laos similar to those of April and May 1971.

South Vietnam Developments

Although the exact line-up in the new 159-member Lower House will not be known until it convenes next month, the government can probably count on a working majority. Returns from the 29 August election show a total of 81 deputies who are clearly pro-government, and 29 nominal independents who generally support the government but could break ranks on any given issue. Open GVN opponents won

42 seats, and seven of the winners are political unknowns. The opposition, led by the 24-man An Quang Buddhist bloc, is likely to be more unified than that in the present house. Improved opposition unity would make it more difficult for the government to have its own way on legislation, particularly in situations requiring a two thirds Lower House majority (e.g., amending legislation passed by the Senate).

President Thieu's announcement that he intends to run unopposed in the 3 October election has sparked widespread criticism and concern among the Vietnamese. Thieu's own political and military lieutenants are far from unanimous in their support for his plan. A number of cabinet ministers who were openly concerned over the ramifications of a one-man race attempted unsuccessfully to persuade Thieu to postpone the election and have the National Assembly organize a new one. Several senior military officers have expressed similar reservations. Some fifteen small political groups, including some which are normally pro-government, are also advancing a variety of proposals for reorganizing the election. The most potentially serious current threat comes from Vice President Ky, who is attempting to organize support from among a broad spectrum of the political opposition and from elements of the military establishment for his objective of ousting Thieu. Most army commanders remain responsive to Thieu, however, and he is not likely to be swayed by domestic criticism so long as there is no outright opposition to his plans from the military leadership.

Though Thieu is probably not in serious political trouble -- yet -- the South Vietnamese political situation is clearly unsettled and contains the potential elements of a full blown crisis which, if it develops, could brew up very quickly. Thieu's recent actions have involved him in the hazard of handing those who dislike him for various reasons a single issue around which his opponents of whatever motivation could temporarily coalesce. Though the flash point may not be reached, the political temperature in South Vietnam is certain to rise perceptibly in the next few weeks, creating an atmosphere in which intrinsically small events -- happening at the wrong time or initially handled the wrong way -- can swiftly generate major consequences. Moreover, during this period of stress there will inevitably be a heightened risk of assassination attempts or other types of politically motivated terrorism. In short, no matter how calm things may seem on the surface at any given moment, the GVN has some very tricky and potentially turbulent water to navigate over the next month or two.

~~Top Secret~~